

**RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
July 29, 2014**

The Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority met for a special meeting on July 29, 2014 in the David J. Blackstead Meeting Room in the City-County Office Building at 221 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street. Vice Chairman Huber presided.

Authority members present were Jim Christianson, Chuck Huber, George Keiser, Todd Van Orman and Josh Askvig.

Authority members Jeff Ubl and Curt Walth were absent.

Technical advisor Bruce Whittey was present.

Staff members present were Jason Tomanek (Community Development - Planning), Hilary Balzum (Community Development - Planning), Brady Blaskowski (Community Development - Building Inspections), Ross Dettmann (Assessing), Jason Hammes (City Attorney's Office) and Brenda Johnson (Assessing).

Guests present were Chris Volk, Reza Kamranian, LeAnn Eckroth, Darin Ketterling, Kathleen Atkinson, Kristin Franzen, Steph Smith, Robert Graham, Katie Vasbinder and Pat Finken.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Huber called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW RENAISSANCE ZONE AUTHORITY MEMBER**

Vice Chairman Huber introduced City Commissioner Josh Askvig as the newest member of the Renaissance Zone Authority. Mr. Askvig replaces Brenda Smith as the Ex-Officio member from the Board of City Commissioners.

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 20, 2014 meeting were distributed with the agenda packet.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Christianson and seconded by Mr. Keiser to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2014 meeting as received with corrections. The motion passed unanimously with members Askvig, Christianson, Huber, Keiser and Van Orman voting in favor.

**CORE INCENTIVE PROGRAM PROJECTS**

**304 EAST FRONT AVENUE – PRESSDOUGH OF BISMARCK, LLC**

Mr. Tomanek said the applicant, Pressdough of Bismarck, LLC/Reza Kamranian, owner of Reza's Pitch, is requesting assistance from the CORE Façade Incentive Grant to secure assistance for the first of three phases of improvements to the facility at 304 East Front Avenue as a CORE Incentive Program project. The property is legally described as Tract 304, Original Plat. Mr. Kamranian is proposing; improvements with this initial phase that include exterior façade work to the south and west-facing building facades. The applicant has indicated a desire to implement the improvements in 2014.

Mr. Tomanek said; based on the findings in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the CORE Façade Incentive grant request to reimburse Pressdough of Bismarck, LLC/Reza Kamranian for 50% of the final project costs up to \$30,000 for the work and materials associated with the south façade renovation project and up to \$30,000 for the work and materials associated with the west façade renovation at 304 East Front Avenue with the following conditions:

1. The project generally conforms to the site plan submitted with the application.
2. All the necessary building permits are obtained.
3. Any modifications to the project as proposed would need to be reviewed by the Renaissance Zone Authority prior to implementation.

Mr. Christianson noted that there is a large disconnect between the architect's project cost estimates and the contractor's bid amount. Mr. Kamranian said the drawings were looked over between himself as well as the architect, painters and contractors and one of the original builders of the building actually works for the contractor now and he said the bid is accurate and reasonable according to what was presented.

Vice Chairman Huber asked if the entire exterior is going to be redone. Mr. Kamranian said at this time he is only doing the south and west sides of the building but does have plans to eventually do the north and east sides as well but they will not be part of the façade grant at this time.

Mr. Whittey asked if this property is included in the Downtown District. Mr. Tomanek said it is zoned CG-Commercial so a Downtown Design Review application will not be required and those regulations will not apply. He said there will be landscape plans in place with phase two of Mr. Kamranian's plans.

Mr. Kamranian asked if the new patio can be included in the work since it adds to the assessed value of the property. Mr. Tomanek explained that patios have not historically been included in CORE projects.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Keiser and seconded by Mr. Askvig to recommend approval of assistance from the CORE Façade Incentive Grant to secure assistance for the first of three phases of improvements to the facility at 304

East Front Avenue as a CORE Incentive Program project. The motion passed unanimously with members Askvig, Christianson, Keiser, Van Orman and Huber voting in favor.

### **114 NORTH 3<sup>RD</sup> STREET – GRANDMA’S HOUSE, LLC**

Mr. Tomanek said the applicant, Chris Volk, is requesting assistance from the CORE Technical Assistance Bank to secure professional architectural services to determine feasibility to remodel the building and the apartment units and to assess the structural integrity and condition of the historic building at 114 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. The property is legally described as Lots 4-6, Block 52, Original Plat. The applicant, Chris Volk, has indicated a desire to renovate each of the 65+ apartment units and to have a restaurant tenant on the first floor of the building. Grandma’s House, LLC is the current owner of the property.

Mr. Tomanek said, based on the findings in the staff report, staff recommends approval of the request from Chris Volk for a Technical Assistance Bank grant, which would allow the applicant to procure the services of a licensed architect and a licensed engineer to assist with a feasibility study, preliminary review and design assistance, renovation vs. restoration options, preliminary cost estimates and code analysis. The maximum architectural grant amount of \$2,475.00 is based on an hourly rate of \$110.00 for a maximum of 30 hours and a 25% match provided by the applicant. The maximum engineering grant amount of \$5,775.00 is based on an hourly rate of \$110.00 for a maximum of 70 hours and a 25% match provided by the applicant.

Mr. Christianson asked Mr. Volk if there has been any new update since he put his application in. Mr. Volk said he is just waiting on the appraisal and is hoping to push the closing date back to August 30<sup>th</sup> and would like to use the existing restaurant and kitchen on the first floor and have renovated apartments on the floors above. His plan is to renovate the apartments one floor at a time and also replace the roof. He said the units do have tenants and he cannot very well kick them out.

Mr. Askvig asked how often an owner does a total renovation after the assessment is completed. Mr. Tomanek said the last assessment for this property far exceeded the applicants’ budget for renovations and the project was dropped due to the extensive amount of work that needed to be done.

Mr. Keiser asked if Renaissance Zone codes regulations apply to this property if Mr. Volk chooses to forgo the Renaissance Zone program. Mr. Tomanek said they would not but that there will be some design regulations because it is in the Downtown District, so externally it has to be aesthetically consistent and building site plan reviews will apply internally even if there is no public assistance or funding awarded.

Mr. Askvig said he agrees with the benefits of having an engineer on the project, but what will be asked for in the architectural reviews. Mr. Volk said things like wider doorways for ADA compliance and feasibility requirements are needed.

Bob Graham, 915 North 10<sup>th</sup> Street, asked if there is an architect lined up yet for the project. Mr. Volk said he has hired an architect from REH, PC. Mr. Graham then asked why Mr. Volk feels tax payers should pay for this project. Vice Chairman Huber said that is not a question to be answered by the Authority at this time, but it can be discussed privately with the applicant if so desired.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Keiser and seconded by Mr. Christianson to recommend approval of assistance from the CORE Technical Assistance Bank grant, which would allow the applicant to procure the services of a licensed architect and a licensed engineer to assist with a feasibility study, preliminary review and design assistance, renovation vs. restoration options, preliminary cost estimates and code analysis for the facility at 114 North 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as a CORE Incentive Program project. The motion passed unanimously with members Christianson, Keiser, Van Orman, Askvig and Huber voting in favor.

### **RENAISSANCE ZONE BOUNDARY MODIFICATION REQUEST – DISCUSSION**

Mr. Tomanek said Pat Finken is considering an opportunity to purchase the property at 117 West Front Avenue, currently occupied by United Printing. He said the Renaissance Zone blocks around the property have either been removed or marked completed and Mr. Finken indicated a desire to be added to the Renaissance Zone.

Mr. Tomanek said a different block would either have to be removed or deemed completed and that the Renaissance Zone has been expanded before. He said the owners in those blocks potentially being removed would need to be notified with the request that they provide any intentions for improvements or if they have any opposition to be removed. He said the United Printing property could be used for commercial purposes but there are also single-family homes mixed with other businesses on the block that could benefit from the assistance. Mr. Tomanek noted that the single-family homes are considered non-conforming uses because the current CG-Commercial zoning district does not allow single-family homes as a permitted use. He then said it will take approximately three months to complete the process because of the notification requirements and meeting processes involved including approval by the Board of City Commissioners.

Mr. Christianson said there are two blocks south of Front Avenue that are completed but have not been removed. Mr. Tomanek said they are completed and removed but are still shown so as to avoid them being added back in by mistake. He added that there are multiple blocks that have potential for development.

Vice Chairman Huber said the Galpin property as well as Civic Square are completed and that block could be removed. Mr. Askvig said there are inactive residential blocks to the northwest that could also come out.

Kate Herzog, Downtowners Association, said there has been some interest in the residential area for redevelopment, specifically the former Petals and More building at the intersection of 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Rosser Avenue.

Mr. Christianson asked if the legislature would allow an expansion if the request was presented. Mr. Keiser said possibly but blocks that have been removed cannot be added back in. Mr. Tomanek said the Department of Commerce does not like to see projects being chased by communities and cautioned that support from other property owners on the block being considered would be necessary in order to add the new block into the Renaissance Zone or too many boundary modifications.

Mr. Askvig said he would like to move to have the Horner owned property that includes Magic Touch as well as the Civic Square block owners contacted to potentially be removed.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Askvig and seconded by Mr. Christianson for staff to start the process of contacting owners for modifications to the Renaissance Zone boundaries. The motion passed unanimously with members Christianson, Keiser, Van Orman, Askvig and Huber voting in favor.

#### **RENAISSANCE ZONE TECHNICAL ADVISOR – DISCUSSION**

Mr. Tomanek said an application was received for another Renaissance Zone Technical Advisor. Ms. Katie Vasbinder has expressed her interest, lists a Master's degree in Architecture from North Dakota State University as well as work on the United Printing project as some of her qualifications, and that she believes in the development and enhancement of downtown.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Mr. Christianson to appoint Ms. Vasbinder as the new Technical Advisor of the Renaissance Zone Authority. The motion was seconded by Mr. Keiser and passed unanimously with members Christianson, Huber, Keiser, Van Orman and Askvig voting in favor.

#### **DOWNTOWN UPDATE PROVIDED BY THE DOWNTOWNERS ASSOCIATION**

Ms. Herzog said street changes in the Downtown Sub Area Study Master Plan have indicated the conversion of the one-way streets included in Chancellor Square to two-way streets by using reconfigurations without major curb and gutter work. She said becoming more multi-modal is being encouraged with larger street widths and strategic placement plans. She said 5<sup>th</sup> Street south of the Civic Center would be reduced to three lanes to encourage pedestrian friendliness while still moving the same amount traffic and opening up development.

#### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Vice Chairman Huber asked if there is an update to give on the Quiet Rail project. Mr. Askvig said Burlington-Northern-Santa Fe Railroad was sent a letter recently requesting an update. Otherwise there is nothing to report.

#### ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Vice Chairman Huber adjourned the meeting of the Bismarck Renaissance Zone Authority at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Hilary Balzum  
Recording Secretary



Chuck Huber  
Vice Chairman